

ABSTRACT

A carrier is carried between a receiving stage (21) (or a delivery stage (22)) by a movable table (24). Each of the stages is provided with a cut-away area (30) extending from one end of the stage to a predetermined position at which the carrier is placed 5 on the stage and allowing the movable table (24) to move vertically therethrough. The movable table (24) is moved under the stage to a position directly below the carrier mounted on the stage, is raised through the cut-away area (30) to lift up the carrier, and is moved away from the stage together with the carrier. A sensing device (10) 10 incorporated into the movable table (24) inspects the condition of wafers contained in the carrier while the movable table (24) is being moved to the position directly below the carrier placed on the stage.

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